

MEMORANDUM TO THE WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

February 10, 2004

TO: *Members of the Water Policy Task Force*

FROM: *Daniel E. Griset, Sr. Regional Planner, X895, griset@scag.ca.gov*

SUBJECT: *Water Supply and Growth Prospects in the Mojave Basin*

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive for any later consideration of a final draft regional water management plan.

BACKGROUND:

In a continuation of Task Force reviews of future growth and water supply prospects around the region, a panel of speakers will discuss these issues within the context of the greater Mojave River Basin. The panel will include Kirby Brill, General Manager of the Mojave Water Agency; Randy Hill, General Manager of the Victor Valley Water District; Carlos Rodriguez of the Baldy View Chapter of the Building Industry Association; and Tim Piasky, Environmental Affairs Officer of the Southern California Building Industry Association.

In SCAG growth projections there will be very substantial growth in the Mojave Basin over the next 25 years. Comparing Year 2000 with the Year 2030 forecast, the Basin will see an increase in population from 304,000 to 610,000; in households from 102,000 to 211,000; in jobs from 83,700 to 245,700. These increases represent a unique water management challenge for the communities growing in this high desert setting.

Kirby Brill, General Manager of the Mojave Water Agency, will introduce the soon-to-be completed Regional Water Management Plan that has been prepared by the Agency. This Plan represents an integrated water planning effort, combining both surface and groundwater supplies. The Agency has played a lead role in large scale water initiatives in the Basin throughout its existence since 1960, a time when the Agency became a state water contractor with rights to State Project Water that it distributed as a wholesaler to retail Basin water agencies. (The map below describes the communities served and the infrastructure developed by the Agency to support these services.)

Many of the water affairs of the Basin have been influenced by water shortages and conflicts over water rights. After an extended period of costly litigation over water rights in what had become an overdrafted groundwater basin, the Agency was assigned the watermaster duties by the court. These official duties

involve continuing accounting and management responsibilities that are intended to reverse the depletion of groundwater supplies, to develop replenishment programs for the Basin and to better managing the area's water resources. The Mojave Water Agency's website can be found at <http://www.mojavewater.org>.

Randy Hill, General Manager of the Victor Valley Water District (VVWD), will discuss the water and growth relationship in the Basin from the standpoint of a retail water agency. VVWD has 65,000 consumers in its high Desert service area. Its \$31 million annual budget includes \$11 million for operations and \$20 million for constructing new facilities. Mr. Hill will describe some of the District's efforts to encourage conservation and reduce the need for residential landscape irrigation, as well as District estimates of future water costs for its customers. The Agency website can be accessed at <http://www.vvwater.org/index.cfm>.

Carlos Rodriguez and Tim Piasky, staff executives with the Building Industry Association, will present an industry outlook for the Mojave Basin, giving special attention to the water services and infrastructure needs associated with projected future growth.

MAP:

